



COMMISSION ON

ASIAN PACIFIC

AMERICAN AFFAIRS

CAPAA

Improving the lives of Asian Pacific Americans

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear APA Community Members and Friends,

The CAPAA is proud to release this inaugural issue in honor of the people we serve, the Asian Pacific American (APA) community. With this edition and subsequent releases, we will endeavor to inform, educate, and offer ways to address issues that affect our well-being.

To serve the APA community, the CAPAA is singular in its pursuit to fulfill our legislatively mandated mission: To improve the well-being of APAs by insuring their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, and other areas. Nevertheless, we believe it is not enough to simply gain access. It is also vitally important that our needs are being met appropriately, justly, and equitably.

We hope to be able to illustrate some of our work on behalf of the APA community in the newsletter articles.

Special Acknowledgements

On a personal note, I want to thank the Commissioners, the APA community and its friends for your warm reception of me. The last few months have been exhilarating to say the least. Every day I work is a joy. The challenges my staff and I face only affirm our commitment to serve APAs and the greater community of our great state. Thank you, too, for your civic engagement during the legislative session. The CAPAA simply cannot fulfill its mission without the active participation of the people we serve.

I would also like to recognize a few individuals for their work with the APA heritage month poster and APA curriculum development packet. These individuals went beyond

the call of duty when they clearly did not have to. They are exemplary as human beings and outstanding as professionals. The CAPAA is grateful to:

❖ Executive Director of the Department of Printing, George Morton, who gave unselfishly and generously to make sure that the APA heritage month posters were possible at all. He and his staff are simply superb!

❖ Director of The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Joan Yoshitomi, for supporting APA history in our K-12 schools and for making sure that every school received the APA curriculum materials. Without her, the materials would not have seen the light of day.

❖ Graphic designer, Catherine Rivera, who designed the poster and this newsletter. She has great taste and is wonderful to work with.

In addition, the CAPAA recognizes the generous financial contributions of *The Bon Marché* and the Washington Education Association towards the APA history curriculum project. Their community stewardship helps advance APA educational priorities. For that we are very thankful.

I also want to thank the CAPAA staff, Ko Vang and Tony Cube, as well as the interns Lori Sue, Celesta Sligar and Mark dela Cruz for their professionalism, hard work, and passion to serve the APA community. A good staff makes *ALL* the difference. We, at CAPAA, hope that you enjoy this inaugural edition. Please comment freely and let us know what you think!



Miebeth R. Bustillo-Hutchins, Executive Director

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Dear Friends,

In this inaugural issue, it is important for us to reflect on the role of the CAPAA and how it can serve the needs of our community.

By law, the CAPAA acts as an advisory board to the Governor and as a liaison between state government and the APA community. The CAPAA represents the APA community in various state task forces and advisory boards, and is charged with the responsibility of articulating the particular concerns of our community and advocating for policies which address these concerns.

In order to fulfill this responsibility, the CAPAA must, of course, be rooted in the life of our community and be aware of and responsive to the changing needs of our community. In this relationship, the CAPAA has a dual responsibility of not only informing and educating the community, but just as important, listening to and following the wishes of our community. It is my belief that the CAPAA has carried out its

duty in a faithful and effective manner.

The recent attacks on immigrant rights, affirmative action, Asian political contributions and bilingual education make it imperative that we be involved in public life and be ever vigilant against threats to our community. I believe that the CAPAA plays an important role in this challenge, and that is why I would hope that all of you will be involved in the work of the CAPAA.



Tony Lee

Tony Lee, Chair

APA Service Agency Snapshots

International Community Health Clinic and Korean Women's Association

By Erik Derr, Special to the CAPAA

For thousands of Asian Pacific Islanders throughout the Puget Sound area, community empowerment goes by two other names: International Community Health Clinic and Korean Women's Association.

Each of the two non-profit service agencies was founded in the early 1970's to fill specific needs in the region's API residents, particularly recent immigrants. The Seattle-based IC Health Clinic was established to provide medical services to the needy and indigent. The Korean Women's Association, which mainly serves Pierce, South King, Lewis, Mason and Thurston counties, primarily offered individual and family support to the ethnic Korean wives of American servicemen.

Over the years, however, the agencies have become cultural resources and social advocates for the wider API community. Staff at each agency have taken the lead numerous times in addressing and solving a wide array of community issues.

Demand for the agencies' primary services has also grown, despite the decisions of legislators at the federal and state levels in recent years to cut government services to new immigrants.

"We have been growing at an amazing speed," says IC Health Clinic executive director Jerry Klika, pointing out that his clinic has seen a 21 percent rise in patient visits over the last year. Through 1999, the clinic, with locations in Seattle's International District and Holly Park neighborhood, served more than 33,500 patients, including 18,130 first-time visitors.

The clinic serves low-income, limited or non-English speaking Asian Pacific Islanders throughout King County. It provides comprehensive primary medical, dental and specialty care, with an emphasis on education, prevention and early intervention.

Almost as soon as the clinic's International District center and administrative operations moved to a new office complex late last year, there still wasn't enough room to accommodate the influx of patients. So, the administration had to move into a third location.

When Korean Women's Association began in 1972, it offered ongoing services to approximately 100 clients each month, says spokeswoman Tiffany Mose. Now the organization, which has since opened to the general public, provides numerous social programs to approximately 500 clients a month.

Korean Women's Association specifically caters to those in the multi-lingual and limited-English ethnic Asian communities and focuses special attention on domestic violence intervention and family education. It also addresses elder care, vocational and naturalization needs.

Advancing Community Interests

By Tony Cube, Legislative Liaison



Governor Gary Locke, Representatives Velma Veloria (D-11) and John Lovick (D-44) address 1,200 Unity Day participants in the Capitol Building on February 28, 2000.

The 2000 legislative session concluded on May 2, reflecting over 30 days of overtime. The 60-day session should have ended on March 9. Instead, all corners of power (the co-led House Democrats and Republicans, the Senate and the Governor's Office) worked together to address funding shortfalls due to the passage of Initiative 695, which reduced car tabs to \$30 and therefore reduced state revenues. Nonetheless, community empowerment, coalition work, and perseverance resulted in advancing issues critical to the APA community as well as to other people of color communities. Below is a summary of what happened to the five bills and issues raised as priorities by the APA community.

Legislation that passed and programs preserved:

- ❖ Civil Liberties Public Education Program Fund—creates educational materials to teach K-12 students about Japanese-American WWII internment and the fragile nature of constitutional rights passed. It is funded in the Supplemental Budget at \$150,000.
- ❖ Asian Pacific American Heritage Month—designates May as APA Heritage Month in Washington State. It also requires the CAPAA to coordinate statewide activities during the fourth week of May.



Governor Gary Locke signs House Bill 1572—creating the Civil Liberties Public Education Program Fund.

❖ Monitoring Racial Profiling—requires the State Patrol and encouraging other police agencies to monitor traffic stops for patterns of racial profiling, also passed the legislature with similar vote counts.

❖ State Refugee Assistance Program, which offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and employment services; and the Naturalization Program, which funds citizenship classes, legal counseling, and other services—are both preserved.

❖ Bilingual Education Study in the Supplemental Budget—is vetoed by the Governor. Community activists were concerned that the proposed study would not have asked the necessary questions to address the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students or the program.

Legislation that died:

❖ Linked Deposit Program—would have extended the life of the program, which allowed small businesses owned by women and minorities to get loans from banks at reduced rates.

❖ Basic Liability Insurance to Low-Income People—would have made it easier for low-income people to get low-cost car insurance.

Other legislation that passed and of interest to APAs:

❖ Patient Bill of Rights—increases access to care providers and includes language to address the interpretive needs of LEP individuals.

❖ World War II Oral History—records WWII oral histories and includes diversity language to be inclusive of all Washington State men and women who served.

Along with advancing policies, the CAPAA took part in a historic event: Asian Pacific American and African American Unity Day on Feb. 18th. Unity Day marked the first time APAs and African Americans came together before the legislature to advance common legislative interests. This unification also planted a seed for future collaborations with other ethnic communities.

Generally, the 2000 Legislative Session was productive for the people of color communities. Much more work needs to be done, however, as we move forward towards the 2001 Legislative Session that will consider how over \$21 billion in state funds will be spent on education and social services, for example, as well as how to manage without the funds lost under I-695.

Southeast Asians in Washington State

By Ko Vang, Community Outreach Coordinator

It's hard to believe that Southeast Asian Americans have only been in the United States for the past 25 years. Unlike other Asian Pacific American (APA) groups, who immigrated as early as the mid-1800's to the U.S., voluntarily or as cheap labor for the developing states, the Southeast Asians entered the borders of the U.S. as refugees of the Vietnam War.

From 1975 to 1978, three different waves of Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, and various indigenous peoples) immigrated to the U.S. The federal government, in its struggle to resettle the refugees, contracted with private voluntary agencies, such as the International Rescue Committee, to disperse the refugees throughout the U.S. in order to prevent resource restraints. Today, although small pockets of Southeast Asians may be found in every state, the majority (90%) resides in 10 states.

Washington State participated in the resettlement policy and received 18,000 Southeast Asian refugees in 1975. Since that time, this population has grown significantly. Although the actual numbers of Southeast Asian Americans in Washington is

not known, the 1990 Census estimated that out of the 210,958 Asian Pacific Islander (API) in Washington State, 18,696 were Vietnamese; 11,096 were Cambodian; 6,191 were Laotian; 2,386 were Thai; and 6,779 were other Asians (which include indigenous Southeast Asians). Today, the majority of Southeast Asian Americans reside within King, Snohomish, and

Pierce counties as well as smaller communities in the cities of Bellingham, Spokane, Vancouver, and others.

The issues facing Southeast Asian in Washington are various. In a recent study which reports APAs as being the most educated of all ethnic groups (at the college level, 38% of Asians had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 20% of the total population), Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong were found to have the

lowest attainment. The study also found that Southeast Asian refugees in particular makeup the fastest-growing segment on welfare. To illustrate, in 1989, about 11% of Asian families were in poverty with Hmong and Cambodian families having the highest family poverty rates, 62% and 42% respectively. In addition, Southeast Asian communities also face difficulties in the areas of bilingual education, job training, business development, representation in government, as well as access to technology and social services due to language and cultural barriers.

Despite their struggles, the progress of Southeast Asians communities in Washington is evident in the existence of numerous grassroots organizations, churches, cultural service, and support services found statewide. Also, Washington libraries carry publications on Southeast Asian history, customs, and culture; museums have exhibited their contributions to diversity; college include them in class courses; and the state continue to recognize Southeast Asian Americans in Washington annually during new year and APA heritage month celebrations.



Photo courtesy of Dean Wong.

Members of the Hmong community.

Southeast Asians in Washington State

Demographics

- 18,000 Southeast Asian refugees in 1975 as a result of the U.S. resettlement policy after the Fall of Saigon.
- 18,696 (Vietnamese), 11,096 (Cambodian), 6,191 (Laotian), 2,386 (Thai), and 6,779 other, including indigenous Southeast Asians (1990 Census).
- Today, the majority reside in King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties.

Issues

- Hmong and Cambodians have the highest family poverty rates—62% and 42% respectively—in the Asian American community (1989 figures).
- Bilingual education, job training, business development, representation in government, as well as access to technology and social services.

APA History in K-12

By Miebeth R. Bustillo-Hutchins, Executive Director

Recognizing APA Heritage and History

Senate Bill (SB) 6622—designating May as APA Heritage Month for the State of Washington—became law on March 30, 2000 and took effect on April 30, 2000. A similar designation for the nation unanimously passed the 102nd Congress in 1992, yet little APA history is discussed in our classrooms today.

The CAPAA believes that a full appreciation of APA heritage and history must go beyond celebrating ethnic food, customs, languages, and traditional dances. We believe that APA heritage and history must also be examined in the context of our nation's societal struggle and progress.

Therefore, the CAPAA is actively advocating the advancement of APA curriculum development especially as it relates to social studies. We believe that such a development is aligned with the goals of our state's systemic reform. We support the academically held notion that a comprehensive intellectual examination of our diverse and multidimensional history is key to preparing effective citizens in an increasingly complex world. We further support OSPI's conclusions that curricular development around social studies must offer ways to critically study how different people interact with each other and to examine how these interactions are manifested in our societal structures (e.g., education systems, legal institutions, economic practices, and community building policies). In so doing, we gain clues about what our future might look like and anticipate its challenges.

APA History—An American History

Fundamentally, APA history is American history. It is history that speaks of America's struggle and progress within an increasingly diverse cultural setting. It is history that is manifested in what we teach, in the ways we teach it, and how laws govern our daily existence.



Samoan Americans performing a traditional dance.

It is deeply regrettable, however, that currently students are engaged in at best only limited substantive academic discussions around APA history in the K-12 setting. For many, they first learn of APA history through courses in American Ethnic Studies (if offered at all) in an institution of higher learning (if they get there). This is an unfortunate condition that can be appropriately addressed



Photo courtesy of Dorothy Cardova.

Filipino American merchants in the 1940's.

through curriculum development. Ultimately, American history must reflect all our nation's people. Also, in order to prepare students to become effective citizens, it is common sense to begin this study in K-12, where students of all backgrounds begin a common public and social education.

Currently, history is largely seen through black and white lenses, leaving APAs—the fastest growing racial group in the nation and in Washington State—wanting of history that speaks of their experiences and their role in our nation's democratic landscape. Such a limited perspective contributes to and perpetuates societal alienation of APAs in the American experience.

Curriculum development in this area would begin to speak of the APA's role in our nation's and state's progressive and sometimes difficult history. APAs have been a part of the American experience since the mid 1700's when Filipino sailors from Spanish galleons created small towns in the Louisiana bayous. We, Asians and Pacific Islanders, have been a part of our country's great expansion westward and within as railroad, fish cannery and farm workers, as well as farmers, coal miners, educators, artists, doctors, scientists, and policymakers. As our

nation struggled through racial tensions, APAs have also been subject to persecution as illustrated by the internment of people of Japanese descent—two-thirds of whom were American citizens—in remote and desolate detention camps in the western U.S. during World War II. There is much to examine and learn from these centuries of experiences.

Your Advocacy

In celebration and recognition of APA Heritage Month, the CAPAA produced an APA History Curriculum Development Packet. It includes the commemorative APA Heritage Month of May 2000 poster, featuring selected APA dates and events to help facilitate the integration of APA history in class discussions. It also includes an APA History curriculum developed by the University of Washington History Department. There are hundreds more of course.

Ultimately, your advocacy within your own school buildings to advance APA curriculum development is paramount. Without your support, progress is likely to be slow. Please talk with the social studies department heads, social studies and history teachers in your schools to advance APA history curriculum development. It is long overdue.

To order the CAPAA APA Heritage Month poster, please call (206) 464-5820.



Photo courtesy of Mel Kang.

Korean American children.

CAPAA Calendar and Selected Community Events

CAPAA Meetings, Forums and Summits

- Board Meeting: June 17, Yakima or Bellevue/Kirkland area.
- Board Meeting: November 11, Bellingham or King County.
- Forums are on an as need basis. Call CAPAA for more information.

APA Heritage Month Community Events

- "Through Our Eyes: A Century of Asian Pacific American Photography in the Northwest" at the Wing Luke Asian Museum.
- May 19-Annual Pinoy Teach Day at the University of Washington Campus. Email Patricia Espiritu, espiritu@u.washington.edu

- May 20-10th Annual API heritage celebration at the Everett Naval Station. Call Maria Ibarbia (425) 673-2983.
- APA Heritage Month Celebration & API Vote 2000: May 23, 6:00-8:00 PM, sponsored by the University of Washington Asian Student Commission and CAPAA. Contact CAPAA (206) 464-5820.

Selected Dates and Events of APA History

For a list of selected APA dates and events, please go to <http://www.capaa.org>

Volunteer and Make a Difference

- If you are a student seeking a work study site or internship opportunities or if you are a community member who would like to help CAPAA serve the APA community, please call Ko Vang at (206) 464-5820. You *will* make a difference.

Be Part of the CAPAA Community

If you would like to receive this bi-monthly newsletter or be part of our email and update list, please call, email or write our office.



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Editor:
Miebeth Bustillo-Hutchins
Contributors:
Miebeth Bustillo-Hutchins,
Tony Cube, Erik Derr,
Tony Lee, and Ko Vang
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CAPAA

501 South Jackson,
Suite 306
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 464-5820
Fax: (206) 464-5821
email: capaa@halcyon.com
<http://www.capaa.org>

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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The State of Washington
CAPAA
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501 South Jackson, Suite 306
Seattle, WA 98104